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C O N F I D E N T I A L LJUBLJANA 000517

SIPDIS

BELGRADE PASS TO PODGORICA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/18/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NATO](#) [MARR](#) [SI](#)
SUBJECT: SLOVENIA SUPPORTS NATO MAP FOR GEORGIA AND
UKRAINE, OFFERS TO HELP MONTENEGRO

REF: LJUBLJANA 145

Classified By: DCM Brad Freden, reasons 1.4(b,d)

[11](#). (U) This is a guidance request; please see para 5.

[12](#). (C) Slovenia strongly supports a decision at the December ministerial to offer Georgia and Ukraine's entry into NATO's Membership Action Plan (MAP). In a November 19 meeting, MFA NATO-policy Advisor Tadej Rupel said that Slovenia's support for Ukraine and Georgia has not diminished since the Bucharest summit (reftel), even though some NATO allies have concerns. Although Rupel was not optimistic that the foreign ministers would reach agreement on MAP for Georgia and Ukraine in Brussels, he hoped that they would by the April summit. He noted that Slovenia wants Ukraine and Georgia to be invited together. Rupel stated that Foreign Minister-designate Samuel Zbogar would lead Slovenia's delegation if, as expected, he is confirmed by Parliament in the coming days. Rupel himself, who served under Zbogar in Washington, is rumored to be in line for a top position in the Minister's cabinet.

[13](#). (C) Rupel stated that Slovenia also supports NATO expansion, including MAPs for western Balkan countries. He acknowledged that it will take some time before Serbia and Bosnia are ready to begin that process. Rupel added, however, that Montenegro might be ready for a "fast track" process for MAP due to its greater capacity to implement necessary reforms to meet NATO criteria. Rupel commented that Slovenia had also supported MAP for Macedonia in Bucharest, along with Croatia and Albania, but recognized that such a decision might take longer.

[14](#). (C) Rupel said that Slovenia's NATO PermRep had recently approached Ambassador Volker about Slovenia becoming the Contact Point Embassy (CPE) in Podgorica. He and other MFA contacts have reiterated Slovenia's request for U.S. support with us. He explained that Slovenia is anxious to help its western Balkan neighbors navigate the path toward full European intergration, including NATO membership. Supporting this effort is one of Post's top MSP goals.

[15](#). (C) Post is encouraging Slovenia to pursue its interest in becoming the NATO Contact Point Embassy in Podgorica, but would appreciate any specific Department or USNATO guidance.
GHAFARI